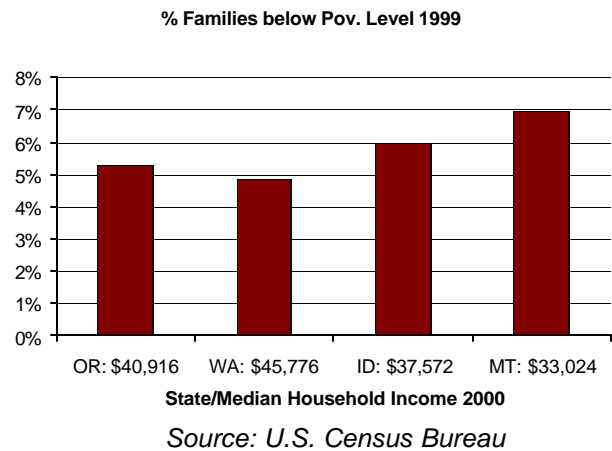
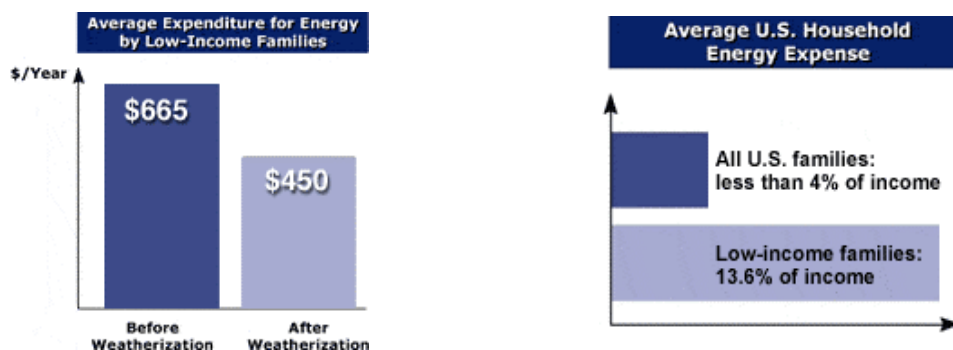


Weatherization Helps Low-Income Families

Everyone complains about the high cost of energy, but energy bills can have a serious impact on low-income families. Low-income weatherization efforts help alleviate the tough choices families have to make when faced with high energy bills. Following weatherization, more income is available to families for other important uses such as paying rent or medical expenses. This is especially important in Idaho and Montana. Energy expenditures per household are higher in those cold climates, which also have higher percentages of families below the poverty level than other states in the region.



From fiscal year 1983 through 1995, BPA directly funded low-income weatherization through customer utilities, saving low-income families about 16 aMW. Although no longer directly funded, BPA still supports low-income weatherization through state programs. Those efforts from fiscal year 1996 through 2003 have saved an additional 3 aMW. This year, in addition to the \$2.5 million base budget, BPA will provide an extra \$500,000 to fund low-income weatherization.



Source: U.S. DOE – Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

In other low-income news, the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association (NEADA) conducted phone and mail interviews with a sample of Low-income Heating Assistance Program (LIHEAP) participants. Surveys were conducted in 20 states; Washington was one of the states, with 100 phone and three mail interviews completed. No other Northwest states were included. The report was published April 2004.

Overall results show that in order to pay at least part of their energy bill in the past five years:

- 22 percent of respondents did without food for at least one day
- 38 percent went without medical/dental care
- 21 percent reported that they got sick because their home was too cold
- 20 percent couldn't pay the heating bill because of medical expenses
- 28 percent missed a rent or mortgage payment

Also, attributed to high energy bills:

- 9 percent moved in with family or friends
- 4 percent were evicted
- 4 percent were homeless

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